

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**Friday, January 15, 2010****CONTACT:**Allen Sommerfeld, Communications Coordinator
651.201.6185, Allen.sommerfeld@state.mn.us**MDA announces recipients of Forest Protection Reserve Grants***Funding will be used by local governments to fight emerald ash borer*

St. Paul, Minn. – The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) today announced the recipients of \$1.875 million in Forest Protection Reserve Grants to aid municipalities and organizations in preventing new infestations of EAB or to respond to already known infestations of the insect.

The Forest Protection Reserve Grants are part of an appropriation from the Outdoor Heritage Fund, established by Minnesota voters in November 2008 when they approved the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment to the state constitution. The list of grant recipients is available on MDA's website at <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/news/fprgrantlist.pdf>.

The MDA created two grant programs – the Incident Response Grants Program and the Planning and Preparedness Grants Program – each with specific goals for containing EAB. The Incident Response Grants are to help local governments and other organizations respond effectively to documented infestations of EAB. A total of \$1 million was available in the Incident Response Grants Program. The second grant program, Planning and Preparedness Grants, was designed to help plan and prepare for the invasion of EAB. The total available in the Planning and Preparedness was \$875,000.

Three applications (requesting an estimated total of \$1.43 million) were submitted for the Incident Response Grants Program, and a total of 73 applications (requesting an estimated total of \$4.3 million) were submitted for the Planning and Preparedness Grants Program. Grant applications were reviewed and evaluated by a committee comprised of representatives from MDA, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, USDA Forest Service, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Plant Protection and Quarantine, Minnesota Forest Resources Council and the League of Minnesota Cities. From the applications submitted, three Incident Response projects and 15 Planning and Preparedness projects were selected for funding.

The types of projects that will be funded through these grants include conducting ash tree inventories; removing infested ash trees or trees likely to become infested; planting of a diversity of trees to replace removed ash; surveying to detect EAB; changing ordinances to allow for management of EAB; and EAB-related outreach and education projects.

EAB is an invasive beetle that attacks and kills ash trees. Its larvae kill ash trees by tunneling into the wood and feeding on the tree's nutrients. The beetle was first detected in Minnesota in May 2009 in a St. Paul neighborhood. Since its accidental introduction into North America, EAB has killed millions of ash trees in eastern states. Minnesota is a prime target for EAB, with an estimated 900 million ash trees.

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